

Toward Development of Afghanistan National Stability: Analyses in Historical, Military, and Cultural Contexts

A Monograph

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Abstract

Toward Development of Afghanistan National Stability: Analyses in Historical, Military, and Cultural Contexts by LTC Christopher D. Dessaso, U.S. Army, 58 pages.

American policy in Afghanistan has evolved since the initial engagement of U.S. forces in Afghanistan in 2002. It has become increasingly clear the strategic focus must include a plan to concentrate upon and continue the development of a stable and secure central government supported appropriately by an Afghan National Military. The evolution and progression of the central government as well as the Afghan National Army has become an essential task in the Afghanistan War.

This monograph researches the history of some of Afghanistan's key governing regimes with a focus primarily upon governance, military, economic, and social factors of these previous governments and the national militaries which underpinned these regimes beginning in the mid-nineteenth century through the end of the twentieth century. The intention of this research is to identify potential operational level lessons learned that may assist coalition planners in developing the current and future Afghan National Army toward ensuring a stable and successful central government in Afghanistan. The research further includes discussion and analyses of the culture and geography of Afghanistan as essential factors to be considered. These research findings will provide coalition planners additional means to discover and evaluate possible solutions to the fundamental task of establishing an effective Afghan military which is essential to the creation of a successful, legitimate, and stable central government.

Historical overview of eight national military regimes from 1860 to 1992 and a more detailed analysis of successes and failures of three of these regimes will provide insight and assistance toward the development of the central government and Afghan National Military for the near and further terms. This historical discussion will be examined with respect to the role of a central Afghanistan government and the level of control it may exert upon a national military, cultural factors, geography, and influence of foreign governments. Further analysis within the context of Operation Enduring Freedom and the International Security Assistance Force will provide insight and conclusions of use to coalition planners.

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Introduction

In 2009 the United States Defense Department assessed the security situation in Afghanistan as deteriorating. President Barack Obama announced sweeping changes in both his 27 March and 1 December speeches in which he outlined the details of new strategy. On 27 March 2009, President Obama restated the mission of United States Forces in Afghanistan. The development of the Afghanistan National Army had become an essential task in the Afghanistan War. In the speech that outlined his new policy he addressed the Afghanistan Security Forces. The new strategy he outlined will increase the total number of the Afghan National Army (ANA) from 90,000 to 134,000 and accelerate the timeline from 2014 to 2011.¹ This policy reversed the American policy under President George W. Bush in which the size of the Afghan Security Forces was limited due to long term cost implications.² Since President Obama's 27 March speech, the discussion concerning Afghanistan has emerged to one concerning American strategy, troop strength, and the corruption of the recent Afghan elections.

Among the administration's initial changes were a 21,000 troop increase in February and a change in the NATO and International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) leadership as General Stanley McChrystal was appointed as the new commander, replacing General David McKiernan in May.³ General McChrystal conducted a thorough analysis and review of the entire ISAF

¹ White House Interagency Policy Group, "White Paper of the Interagency Policy Group's Report on U.S. Policy Toward Afghanistan and Pakistan," Office of the President, Washington, D.C., March 2009, 1-5, http://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/Afghanistan-Pakistan_White_Paper.pdf (accessed 9 October 2009).

² Kimberly Kagan, "Afghan Army and Police Forces Must Grow Much Larger," *Washington Examiner*, final edition, August 18, 2009.

³ Kenneth Katzman, "Afghanistan: Post-Taliban Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy," *Congressional Research Service* (March 1, 2010), 29, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL30588.pdf> (accessed 1 March 2010).

mission in Afghanistan.⁴ The assessment had four main points: (1) Change strategy to focus on protecting the population rather than killing the insurgents; (2) there were twelve to eighteen months to act or there could be mission failure; (3) Afghan security forces should be increased beyond the (then) goal of 220,000 to 400,000 (240,000 ANA and 160,000 Afghan National Police [ANP]); and (4) the need to increase troop levels in order to successfully implement the new strategy.

General McChrystal submitted his review along with a request for additional forces to President Obama in August. In December, President Obama issued updated guidance and U.S. strategy for Afghanistan that included an additional troop increase of 30,000 U.S. forces.⁵ The U.S. troop increase was followed by an additional 9,000 troops promised from the coalition allies.⁶ The focus and scope of the war had been changed in order to provide time and space for the Afghanistan government to build the needed capacity to succeed.

This monograph researches the history of the Afghanistan National Military beginning in the mid-nineteenth century through the end of the twentieth century in order to identify possible operational level lessons learned that may assist coalition planners developing the current Afghanistan National Army. The research includes consideration of the culture and geography of Afghanistan as essential factors to be considered. The findings may provide future coalition planners and researchers additional means to identify or evaluate possible solutions to the

⁴ Commander NATO International Security Assistance Force, Afghanistan, and U.S. Forces, Afghanistan, "Commander's Initial Assessment," August 30, 2009. http://media.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/documents/Assessment_Redacted_092109.pdf.

⁵ Steve Bowman and Catherine Dale, "War in Afghanistan: Strategy, Military Operations, and Issues for Congress," *Congressional Research Service* (February 25, 2010), 31. <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R40156.pdf> (accessed 1 March 2010).

⁶ Katzman, "Afghanistan: Post-Taliban Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy," 43.

essential task of developing an effective national military and establishing a stable effective central government in Afghanistan in support of United States and NATO objectives.

From 1863 through 2001 Afghanistan developed eight distinct regimes that had a nationally based military system. The historical analysis of these regimes and the successes and failures they experienced provide possible operational lessons learned that could assist in the current effort to develop the present Afghan National Military. This monograph will provide an overview of Afghanistan's history beginning with the regime of Amir Sher Ali Khan (1863-1878), followed by the regimes of Amir Abdur Rahman Khan (1880-1901), Habibullah (1901-1919), King Amanullah (1919-1929), Nadir Shah (1929-1933), King Zaher (1933-1973), Soviet Communist influence, and finally ending with the post-communist regime (1992-2001).⁷ A detailed analysis will focus on three of the regimes; Abdur Rahman Khan, King Amanullah, and Nadir Shah, in order to compare and contrast them with the current operations being conducted by NATO and ISAF forces. This monograph will identify findings and suggest possible areas of potential use for future planners or researchers.

Afghanistan rebuilt its national military three times following civil war or foreign invasions.⁸ Throughout its history, tribal support and popular uprisings were utilized to defend against foreign invaders and suppress domestic rebellions. The historically weak past Afghan central governments obtained varying degrees of control utilizing a variety of methods in attempting to rule.⁹ Analysis of the history of Afghanistan reveals that when the nation was ruled by a strong national leader (executive), supported by the tribal chiefs and religious leaders, and

⁷ Ali A. Jalali, "Rebuilding Afghanistan's National Army," *Parameters*, Vol.32 (Autumn 2002), 72.

⁸ Ibid., 72.

⁹ Ibid., 73.

backed by a strong centrally controlled professional national military, there has been internal stability. Also, when the government has attempted to implement radical social or economic reform or modernization without consolidating military control and strengthening the central government, disaster has followed. Further historical analysis reveals the impact on Afghanistan due to the interference of foreign countries, particularly Russia and Great Britain.

The analysis of the period of Afghanistan's history explored in this monograph identifies four key factors for consideration that may reveal findings that could be used to suggest potential areas to exploit in order to develop a national military capable of supporting the Afghan government. These factors are: (1) Afghanistan has produced a national military controlled by a centralized government in the past, (2) cultural, religious, and ethnic factors have played a key role in Afghanistan contributing to the success or failure of past Afghan central governments and national militaries, (3) the geography of Afghanistan is a key factor to the development and stability of a central government and utilization of the national military, and (4) the assistance or interference of foreign governments has been a key factor to the success or failure of past Afghanistan governments.

The analysis of these factors will provide the context of possible operational lessons learned for coalition planners developing the Afghanistan Security Forces. The remainder of this monograph will analyze each of these factors, beginning with the geography and demographics, and then the history and culture of Afghanistan from the mid-nineteenth century through the current situation.

Afghanistan Overview

Afghanistan is 652,230 square kilometers, the forty-eighth largest country in the world, slightly smaller than the state of Texas.¹⁰ The climate is arid to semiarid with hot summers and cold winters. The terrain is mostly mountainous, dominated by the Hindu Kush, with plains in the north and southwest. Afghanistan is bordered in the west with a 936 kilometer border with Iran, in the northwest by a 744 kilometer border with Turkmenistan, to the north by a 137 kilometer border with Uzbekistan, in the northeast by a 1,206 kilometer border with Tajikistan, further east by a slight 76 kilometer border with China, and to the south by the highly contentious 2,430 kilometer border with Pakistan.¹¹ There is one major road system that runs the outer circumference of Afghanistan through most of the major cities, as well as a highway from Kabul through the Khyber Pass into Pakistan.¹² The road network serves as the major line of communication in the country and requires security to protect the flow of supplies, equipment and travel. The road from Kabul to Peshawar is a “strategic route that carries 75% of supplies used by U.S. and NATO forces.”¹³

Afghanistan's geographical terrain physically divided the country into the major cities such as Kabul and Kandahar versus the rural areas which are populated with small villages and tribal communities. The harsh physical terrain challenged the central governments in the major cities from providing services to the rural communities where the majority of Afghans live.

¹⁰ CIA - *The World Fact Book*, October 5, 2009. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html> (accessed 1 March 2010).

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² *Institute for the Study of War*, October 9, 2009. <http://www.understandingwar.org/afghanistan-project/maps> (accessed 1 March 2010).

¹³ Ali A. Jalali, “Winning in Afghanistan,” *Parameters*, Vol. 39 (Spring 2009), 14.

Afghanistan's geographical location made it a point of intersection between the Russian/Soviet regimes and the British Empire for three hundred years. Afghanistan has had constant conflict along its external borders as well as constant foreign interference and intervention which resulted in four wars and internal instability.¹⁴ The situation was permanently aggravated due to the illogical setting up of Afghanistan's external borders, particularly the 1893 Durand line, which split the posturing tribes along the southern Afghan and northwest Pakistan borders, creating conflict in the Federal Autonomous Tribal Areas (FATA).¹⁵

The population is estimated at more than 28 million, with 53% of the population between the ages of fifteen and sixty-four, and a median age of seventeen. Less than two and one half percent of the population is older than sixty-four years old.¹⁶ Population is 80% Sunni Muslim and 19% Shia. Ethnically there are 42% Pashtun, 27% Tajik, 9% Hazara, 9% Uzbek, 3% Turkmen, 2% Baloch, and 4% other. Approximately twenty-four percent of the population lives in urban centers. Demographically the Pashtuns reside mainly in the southern and eastern regions, although there are small numbers in the major cities in the north and west. The Tajiks dominate the northeastern region along the Tajikistan border and also heavily populate the major cities throughout Afghanistan except for Khandahar and Farah which are dominated by the Pashtuns. The Hazaras reside in the mountainous center of the country while the Uzbeks consolidate in the north, centered on Mazar-e-Sharif. The Turkmen straddle the length of the Turkmenistan border

¹⁴ Amin Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan: A History of Struggle and Survival* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 7.

¹⁵ Angelo Rasanayagam, *Afghanistan, A Modern History*, 2nd ed. (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005), 184. The five autonomous Tribal Agencies that straddle the Durand line over which Pakistan technically has no jurisdiction.

¹⁶ *Institute for the Study of War*, October 9, 2009. <http://www.understandingwar.org/afghanistan-project/maps> (accessed 1 March 2010).

and the Balochs straddle the Pakistan border across from Baluchistan. There is also a small Nuristan enclave northeast of Kabul.¹⁷

Afghanistan's first ruler was Ahmad Shah Abdali (Durrani), a heroic twenty-five year old Afghan cavalry leader, who was selected at a "Loya Jirga" (council of nobles) in Kandahar in 1747 and remained in power until his death in 1772.¹⁸ Ahmad Shah consolidated and enlarged Afghanistan. He defeated the Moguls west of the Indus, and he took Herat away from the Persians. Ahmad Shah Durrani's empire extended from Central Asia to Delhi, from Kashmir to the Arabian Sea.¹⁹ Afghanistan was the greatest Muslim empire in the second half of the 18th century. Ahmad Shah, the greatest of all Afghan rulers, died of cancer at age 50.²⁰

Dost Mohammad Khan, was ruler from 1826 until his death in 1863, except for the period of the First Afghan War, 1839-1842. He came to power after a civil war caused by a power struggle and years of internal fighting and chaos.²¹ During his first ten year period, he spent fighting the Persians and consolidating the Afghans with mixed results. He was gaining momentum towards reunifying all of Afghanistan when Great Britain invaded and started the First Afghan War.²²

In 1868 Sher Ali gained power and ruled until his death in 1879 at Mazar-e-Sharif during the Second Afghan War (1878-1880). Sher Ali constructed the first modern Afghan National

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Stephen Tanner, *Afghanistan: A Military History from Alexander the Great to the War Against the Taliban* (Philadelphia: Da Capo Press, 2002), 117-122.

¹⁹ Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 335-339.

²⁰ Richard F. Nyrop and Donald M. Seekins, editors, *Afghanistan: A Country Study*. 5th ed. (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government, 1986), 14-19.

²¹ Rasanayagam, *Afghanistan, A Modern History*, xiv, 1-3.

²² Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan*, 31-32.

Army that included a system of recruitment, considerations of ethnic balancing, as well as integration of irregular troops in order to free the government of their dependence upon tribal forces.²³ Sher Ali's rule bore the brunt of the "Great Game."²⁴ The "Great Game" was the name given to the international policies pursued by the British Empire and the Russian Empire/Soviet Union involving Afghanistan throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. Afghanistan became the strategic "buffer zone" used by both Great Britain and Russia.²⁵

Afghanistan has reconstructed the national military three times in the aftermath of civil war or foreign invasions, each case subjective to the "prevailing political and social conditions."²⁶ Historically, the Afghan state relied upon tribal support and popular uprisings to repel foreign invaders and quash domestic rebellions with a traditionally weak central government exerting varying degrees of control.²⁷ A detailed analysis of the history of Afghanistan reveals that when Afghanistan had a strong legitimately selected leader, supported by the tribal chiefs and backed by a strong centrally controlled military, there was internal stability that allowed the ruler to govern.

Section I: Abdur Rahman Khan

Abdur Rahman Khan (1880-1901), known as the "Iron Amir," established the structure and framework for the modern state of Afghanistan and developed a grand strategy based in

²³ Jalali, "Winning in Afghanistan," 76. "At the outbreak of the second Anglo-Afghan War (1878-80), the regular army was about 50,000 strong and consisted of 62 infantry and 16 cavalry regiments, with 324 guns mostly organized in horse and mountain artillery batteries. However, much of the organization existed only on paper. Poor training, lack of unit discipline, lack of unit cohesiveness, and inadequate officer education made the army a paper tiger."

²⁴ Tanner, *Afghanistan: A Military History*, 202-207.

²⁵ Rasanayagam, *Afghanistan, A Modern History*, xvi. The actual phrase "Great Game" was coined by a British Army officer Arthur Conolly, and made famous by Kipling.

²⁶ Jalali, "Rebuilding Afghanistan's National Army," 72.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 73.

nationalism and Islam that would be considered by all of the future leaders of Afghanistan for years to come.²⁸ Through military, political, and social coercion he brought internal stability to Afghanistan. In foreign affairs, he was trapped between the Russian and British empires' expansionist policies which eventually established the current national borders of Afghanistan. Although he received financial support from Great Britain, he had no influence over his country's foreign policy. His positive legacy was Afghan nationalism over religious or tribal considerations. His negative legacy was the brutality it took to stabilize his country and the fact that he was a pawn in the British and Russian establishment of Afghanistan's international borders, especially the Durand line that splits the Pashtun tribal areas between the southern Afghan borders with Pakistan.²⁹

Governance

Abdur Rahman established an Islamic based monarchy/dictatorship and developed three principles for governing Afghanistan: government control over the tribes, consolidating power through the military, and reinforcing the power of the ruler. To these ends he established a strong executive branch supported by a centrally controlled, powerful military and a supreme council (cabinet), a judiciary based upon Shari'a law but controlled by the King not the mullahs, a General Assembly (Loya Jirga) that included elites, tribal leaders, and religious leaders that could advise but not legislate.³⁰ Abdur Rahman believed in Afghan nationalism based in Islam. The king established himself as the religious leader of the country, as well as the political and judicial

²⁸ Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan*, 35.

²⁹ Tanner, *Afghanistan: A Military History*, 218.

³⁰ Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 421.

decision maker.³¹ Abdur Rahman exercised “internal imperialism” that employed the military, regional administrators, and a national spy network that allowed him to consolidate his power and stabilize the country.³² Through his spy network he was able to identify agitators, many of whom were jailed, exiled, or executed. The military dealt harshly with tribes that caused trouble. This included relocation and even conversion to Islam. To maintain order, he established provinces apart from the tribal footprint and appointed regional governors.³³ He also implemented a civil administration system that survived nearly eighty years. All of this allowed him to supersede the tribal influences and penetrate the rural areas of Afghanistan.

In international relations he understood that Afghanistan was the buffer state between Russian (on northern and western borders) and Great Britain (on southern and eastern borders). Great Britain subsidized him (from 1.2 million to 1.85 million Indian rupees per year during his regime), but he did not provoke the Russians and sought to maintain balanced relationships between the two countries.³⁴ The Treaty of Gandamak made Afghanistan a pseudo colony of Great Britain and took away Afghanistan’s right to conduct its own international affairs. Britain originally imposed the treaty upon the previous regime and forced Abdur Rahman to adhere to the mandate as well. Over the course of his rule, the Russians and Britain continued to adjust the borders of Afghanistan in their own interests. In 1893, the British commissioned Sir Mortimer Durand to designate the boundary between Afghanistan and then British India (future Pakistan)

³¹ Rasanayagam, *Afghanistan, A Modern History*, 2.

³² Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan*, 36.

³³ Hafizullah Emadi, *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan* (Westport Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2005), 7.

³⁴ Rasanayagam, *Afghanistan, A Modern History*, 11.

which he designated through the historical Pashtun tribal area.³⁵ The boundary was executed disregarding the tribal and ethnic significance, literally splitting villages, tribes, and families arbitrarily. The Russians and British also collaborated in 1897 to establish the northern border. Russian and British policies to further their self interests at the expense of Afghanistan would continue to create problems well into the twentieth century.

Military

Abdur Rahman was a highly talented field commander from an early age, having trained under William Campbell, and was known as General Sher Mohammed Khan after converting to Islam during his youth.³⁶ He successfully commanded armies under his father, Mohammed Afzal Khan. His first victory as Amir was against the hero of the Second Anglo-Afghan War, Mohammed Ayub Khan, the “Victor of Maiwand,” in 1881.³⁷ Over the course of his twenty year rule, the military conducted eighteen operations to quash revolts and subjugate the tribes throughout Afghanistan.³⁸ This included the forcible relocation of the Ghilzai tribe, the subjugation of the northern ethnic tribes, and the forced conversion to Islam of Kafiristan (renamed Nuristan).³⁹ He executed this strategy with the objective of breaking down the tribal system and replacing it with one nation under one law and one ruler. The most important part of his military system was that it was professionally trained and centrally controlled by him. The Army recruited young boys from non-Pashtun families as well as slave boys from areas forcibly

³⁵ Emadi, *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan*, 31.

³⁶ Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 417.

³⁷ Rasanayagam, *Afghanistan, A Modern History*, 9.

³⁸ Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 418.

³⁹ Tanner, *Afghanistan: A Military History*, 218.

subjugated.⁴⁰ This included regional armies controlled by the regional governor, who often was a military officer appointed by the Amir. Still, some of his forces had to be provided by tribal levies.⁴¹ Abdur Rahman required tribal leaders to produce one fighting man per seven families, but never depended upon these forces in order to maintain his power or that of Afghanistan.

Economic

Economics were not the strong suit of Abdur Rahman's reign. The most significant portion of the treasury was the annual stipend provided by Great Britain. Subject to resources or high priority political issues, economic reforms were initiated. With the assistance of technicians and experts provided by Great Britain he was able to introduce essential communications, printing firms, and his most important achievement, a small arms factory.⁴² The Amir supported the development of small-scale manufacturing involving leather works, medicine, automobiles, and telegraphs.⁴³ The assistance of French and English engineers introduced modern mining methods regarding copper and lead, as well as a mint that produced up to 10,000 rupees a day.⁴⁴

Social

Abdur Rahman understood the diversity of the Afghanistan ethnic tribes and the Russian-British tensions as the core of Afghanistan's problems. He identified Islam as a common thread between Afghans around which he could build the consensus and cooperation necessary to rule.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Rasanayagam, *Afghanistan, A Modern History*, 12.

⁴¹ Jalali, "Rebuilding Afghanistan's National Army," 75.

⁴² Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan*, 37.

⁴³ Emadi, *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan*, 31.

⁴⁴ Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 428.

⁴⁵ Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan*, 35.

In order to gain legitimacy in Islam, Abdur Rahman established himself at the spiritual (Imam) leader of Afghanistan (with the corresponding title of “Millat”).⁴⁶ The argument for justification of his role as an Islamic Imam was that it was “Allah who appoints kings and he is ruled by his divine guidance.” As an Imam he also secured the role of calling jihad, interpreting Shari’a law and the administration of religious endowments.⁴⁷ Although invoking Islam to expel foreign “infidels” had been regularly successful, the notion of solidifying the internal government based on Islam only was not.⁴⁸ The system that invoked loyalty and action on a daily basis was at the tribe. Abdur Rahman, the grandson of Dost Mohammed and a Pashtun from the Durrani tribe understood that to effectively rule Afghanistan he must find ways to prevent the fractious tribal system. To this end, Abdur Rahman built the provincial government systems with the thought of replacing the tribal system enough in order to allow him to effectively rule.⁴⁹

Summary

Abdur Rahman Khan was an effective ruler of Afghanistan because he developed a strong national military that stabilized the country. He reduced his reliance upon tribal and religious leaders and co-opted the supreme council (Loya Jirga) that supported Afghan nationalism. He created an effective bureaucracy of civil administrators that reduced the geographical aspects of Afghanistan and extended his control to the rural areas. He was able to maintain foreign relations with Russia and Great Britain that prevented future invasions, although

⁴⁶ Rasanayagam, *Afghanistan, A Modern History*, 11.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 12.

⁴⁸ Jalali, “Rebuilding Afghanistan’s National Army,” 73.

⁴⁹ Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 420.

he was unsuccessful in gaining independent control of Afghanistan's international policy or in the establishment of the nation's international borders.

He developed a strong national military that provided him the capability to govern all of Afghanistan. He spent twenty years subjugating unruly tribes in order to provide the stability required for the central government to rule. Although he was still forced to maintain use of the tribal levy system, the vast majority of his military was professional and centrally controlled.

Abdur Rahman Khan believed in Afghan nationalism, that Afghans should be governed under one leader as one people and common goals, not a collection of individual tribes with multiple factions. He understood that Islam was the common bond that connected all of the people of Afghanistan; therefore he utilized that principle successfully by reducing the power and influence of the mullahs and elevating his status as the ruler under the principles of Islam. He further reduced the influence of tribal leaders when he established provincial boundaries and assigned provincial governors supported by the military. This allowed him to consolidate and maintain power without the interference of individual tribal or religious agendas.

Abdur Rahman Khan extended his influence into the rural tribal areas of Afghanistan enough to govern when he developed an effective bureaucracy of civil administrators that supported his provincial governors. A centrally controlled and loyal military supported and sustained this system of a combined central and provincial government.

Abdur Rahman Khan understood that Afghanistan was trapped between the ambitions of both Russia and Great Britain and was not powerful enough to sustain a protracted effort from either. Therefore he focused his efforts on maintaining stability inside of Afghanistan which prevented a vacuum that would entice either country to act. Although Great Britain provided his regime with economic support and control of its foreign policy he maintained a non-provocative policy regarding Russia. His strategy prevented invasion of Afghanistan by Russia or Great

Britain but could not prevent either country from interfering with the international borders of Afghanistan, the results of which are still being dealt with today.

The analysis of the regime of Abdur Rahman Khan shows that it is essential to establish a strong military controlled by the central government in order to create stability. Abdur Rahman utilized that military to support his government's efforts to extend services (justice, economic, social) to rural Afghanistan. Additionally he fostered Afghan nationalism by unifying the individual and fractured tribes around the basic principles of an Islamic monarchy but reducing the influence of religious or tribal leaders. Although he was unable to prevent unwanted foreign influence in the affairs of Afghanistan he was able to prevent foreign invasion by controlling what happened within Afghanistan's borders.

Thus, analysis of Abdur Rahman's regime demonstrates that a strong centrally controlled military can create internal stability, prevent foreign invasion, and directly or indirectly support the delivery of government to the rural areas of Afghanistan.

Section II: King Amanullah

The regime of King Amanullah (1919-1929), the "Reformer King," marked the true beginning of independence for Afghanistan by winning control of the nation's foreign policy by waging the Third Anglo-Afghan War.⁵⁰ His personal disdain and mistrust for the British resulted in a close political relationship with the newly formed Soviet Union, but also provided Great Britain a reason to oppose his administration.⁵¹ A true progressive, he boldly engaged in a program of modernization through attempting educational, social, religious, and political reforms guided by his mentor and father-in-law, Mahmoud Tarzi. In the end his efforts to implement

⁵⁰ Tanner, *Afghanistan: A Military History*, 219.

⁵¹ Emadi, *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan*, 32.

reforms failed due to his lack of military power and loss of legitimacy with the tribal chiefs and religious mullahs. His positive legacy was establishing and implementing control of Afghanistan's international policy after the successful Third Anglo-Afghan War and belief in a secular liberal democratic government under a constitutional monarchy. His negative legacy was the inability to develop a strong national military or political coalition in order to provide sufficient internal stability to rule, let alone implement reforms, resulting in the popular revolt that led to his overthrow.

Governance

According to Saikal, upon accepting the monarchy on 28 February 1919, Amanullah began his campaign for reform. His acceptance speech, called the "Royal Manifesto," stated:

1. Afghanistan must become free and independent and must enjoy all rights that all other sovereign nations possess.
2. You will help me with all your strength to avenge the blood of the martyr, my deceased father.
3. The nation must become free; no man should be an object of oppression and tyranny.⁵²

In doing this Amanullah became the first Afghan ruler to seek legitimacy in the public as opposed to the tribal or religious setting. His hunger for nationalism and modernism led him to seek a military confrontation with Great Britain. In April 1919 at the Grand Mosque in Kabul, Amanullah called for jihad as the crowd shouted "death or freedom."⁵³ Supported by his two closest advisers, Mahmud Tarzi and General Mohammed Nadir Khan, Amanullah ordered the attack and Afghan forces won early victories. Initially caught off guard, British forces recovered

⁵² Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan*, 61.

⁵³ Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 442.

and produced a stalemate when they introduced air power and bombed Jalalabad and Kabul.⁵⁴ On 8 August 1919, the British recognized Afghanistan's independence and its right to conduct its own international affairs by signing the Treaty of Rawalpindi.⁵⁵ Afghanistan immediately began to exercise its new found international diplomacy. The newly formed Soviet Union was the first country to recognize Afghanistan and they in turn were the first neighbor to recognize the Soviet Union.⁵⁶ Moscow immediately offered financial and military aid which was followed up by the 1921 Good Neighbor Treaty and the 1922 Nonaggression Treaty.

Starting in 1919 all the way through 1922, Afghan diplomats traveled through North America, Europe, and the Middle East in order to establish diplomatic relationships and make friendly overtures; they were successful in each nation that they visited except for their main target, the United States.⁵⁷ U.S. President Warren Harding received the Afghan mission and promised to consider diplomatic relations but the U.S. government did not positively follow-up. The Afghans were hoping for international support from a nation like the U.S., which had the military infrastructure and economic strength to provide substantial support, but was physically distant enough so as not to infringe upon its borders. The loss of this opportunity left the Afghans with few choices. The United States, concerned about Afghanistan's stability and ties with the Soviets, did not officially recognize the nation of Afghanistan until 1934.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Tanner, *Afghanistan: A Military History*, 219.

⁵⁵ Emadi, *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan*, 31.

⁵⁶ Tanner, *Afghanistan: A Military History*, 221.

⁵⁷ Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan*, 64.

⁵⁸ Tanner, *Afghanistan: A Military History*, 223.

Diplomatic relations with countries in the Middle East and Europe were more successful for Afghanistan.⁵⁹ The regime made significant ties with Turkey, Persia, and Egypt in the Middle East, actually gaining strong support from Turkey in the form of military advisers, teachers, and medical as well as scientific training. Amanullah and Tarzi had special admiration for the Turkish leader and a secular-based government.

In Europe, the regime was again well received in Germany, France, and Italy, receiving full recognition and diplomatic relations as well as moderate financial, political, and technical aid. Although there were mutual overtures with Germany, the strategic situation involving both Russia and Great Britain prevented any such relationship materializing. Once again, Afghanistan was left with the option of garnering the support of one or the other.

Relations with the Soviet Union did not go smoothly. Although the Soviets promised substantial financial and political support with no strings attached, they did not have the economic or industrial capacity to deliver all that they promised. Also, Soviet military operations to suppress Islamic militants (known as the “Basmachi” in Russia) inside their own borders often spilled over into Afghanistan, eventually causing political, military, and religious problems for the regime. The fact that the Soviets were a communist nation that was actively oppressing parts of its internal Muslim population was upsetting to the mullahs. Relations with Great Britain were worse and Amanullah refused to take steps to improve them.⁶⁰ Additionally, Great Britain was also concerned with unrest in India connected to Islamic militants and Amanullah’s possible support.

⁵⁹ Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan*, 65-69.

⁶⁰ Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 448.

In 1921, while the reform effort was in full gear under the veil of an anticorruption campaign, Amanullah held a Loya Jirga in order to develop a strategy to combat corruption, the result being “The Basic Codes of the High State of Afghanistan.”⁶¹ The codes became the basis for the constitution. With the 1923 Constitution, Amanullah attempted to create a secular state with a constitutional monarchy (based upon the 1906 Persian model), provide equal rights to all ethnic peoples, end the system of slavery, and include rights for women and non-Muslims.⁶² He wasted no time in attempting to implement the reform and is known to have disregarded the advice of his two closest advisors, Tarzi and Nadir Shah. Amanullah called a Loya Jirga to review the constitution after being pressured by tribal and religious leaders. Instead of slowing down the pace of his reforms, he began to issue decrees to address them. These events preceded the 1924 Kost rebellion by Pashtun tribesman.⁶³ The rebellion was suppressed a year later and served as an omen of what was to come.

In 1925, Amanullah’s mentor Tarzi resigned. At the same time the Persian government had been overthrown by the secular reformist, Reza Shah who was currently imposing modernization.⁶⁴ As part of the reform, men were ordered to wear top hats and women were ordered to remove their veils. Reza Shah, “commanded a strong army and a subservient centralized bureaucracy.”⁶⁵ The fact of the strong army and centralized bureaucracy were key points that escaped Amanullah. Additionally, both Turkey and Persia were focused upon consolidating their internal power and not supporting the global Islamist movement. This left

⁶¹ Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan*, 79.

⁶² Emadi, *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan*, 31.

⁶³ Rasanayagam, *Afghanistan, A Modern History*, 20.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

Afghanistan without a dependable international partner.⁶⁶ In 1927, King Amanullah and Queen Soroya went on their world tour to all the capitals in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. The tour served to solidify in his mind the need for immediate installation of his reforms upon his return to Afghanistan.⁶⁷

Upon his return, the King called an immediate Loya Jirga in Kabul and presented the details of his reforms that included not only educational, social, political, and economic modernization, and equality for women, but also the wearing of top hats by men and the removal of the veil by women. Queen Soroya and one hundred women accompanying her removed their veils in the presence of the tribal leaders and mullahs.⁶⁸ For the tribal and religious leaders this represented the last straw. King Amanullah's enemies, led predominantly by anti-Amanullah and British supporters, immediately began to actively seek his overthrow. By November of 1928 there was open rebellion in the south, by January of 1929 the king fled his capital Kabul, and by March 1929 the king was exiled in Italy.

Military

King Amanullah initially had the support of the military and its generals including Mohammed Nadir Khan of the Musahiban tribe. His call for jihad and victory in the Third Anglo-Afghan War gave him legitimacy in the eyes of the Afghan Army.⁶⁹ After winning the war, Amanullah immersed himself in pursuing diplomatic relations with the international community and implementing reforms in Afghanistan, but his fatal flaw was trying to implement a "large-

⁶⁶ Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan*, 72.

⁶⁷ Tanner, *Afghanistan: A Military History*, 222.

⁶⁸ Emadi, *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan*, 32-33.

⁶⁹ Tanner, *Afghanistan: A Military History*, 218-219.

scale program of reform without a strong and well-trained army and a loyal and disciplined bureaucracy.”⁷⁰ In 1921, Amanullah began his modernization of the military under the advice of Tarzi and Turkish military advisers.⁷¹ His immediate aim was to make it smaller but more professional and efficient; what actually happened was a twenty-five percent pay reduction, a purge of senior officers and veteran units, and closure of the military academy. By 1924, the address system changed and altered the ultimate size and function of the Army. Military pay and life was severely substandard and the Army became nonfunctional for anyone to see.⁷² Eventually Amanullah scrapped the modernization plans and training was replaced with an educational program. He reduced the size of the Army to 23,010 and finally to a low of 11,000.⁷³ A variety of military equipment from different countries sat rusting due to lack of maintenance, repair parts, and trained personnel necessary to operate it. Corruption at all levels aggravated these problems.⁷⁴

Economic

Initially King Amanullah concentrated on his relationship with the Soviet Union, hoping that support from the Russians would make up the loss of revenue from Great Britain. The King secured foreign aid agreements from the Soviet Union and received aid as early as 1919.⁷⁵ The initial gifts included thirteen airplanes supported by mechanics, pilots, and air routes from

⁷⁰ Rasanayagam, *Afghanistan, A Modern History*, 21.

⁷¹ Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan*, 77.

⁷² Ibid., 78.

⁷³ Jalali, “Rebuilding Afghanistan’s National Army,” 77.

⁷⁴ Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan*, 78.

⁷⁵ Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 451.

Moscow to Kabul. Later the Soviets built telephone lines and roads, while the Germans built the only rail line in Afghanistan. The monetary aid from Great Britain ended after the Third Anglo-Afghan War; the King's negative attitude towards Great Britain assured that they would not support him economically unless it was to strategically blunt the Soviet Union.

Development of the 1923 Constitution allowed the King to focus upon economic reforms inside of Afghanistan. King Amanullah's financial reforms were based upon infrastructure development, reorganizing tax and fiscal systems, broadening opportunities in land ownership, and replacing the old currency (rupee) with a new unit (afghani).⁷⁶ The most lasting effects from the reforms were in land ownership. Due to the reforms, landless peasant farmers were provided the opportunity to purchase land from the monarchy at reasonable prices. Traditional land ownership left the vast majority of land in the hands of the monarchy, tribal leaders, the tribal community, or religious endowment.

The reforms concerning infrastructure had more mixed results. Clearly important projects were undertaken and completed including roads, telephone lines, as well as government and industrial structures. But many of the structures proved to be lavish expenditures and contributed to the overspending of the budget. One area where the government saved money was in military spending. The military budget was slashed and the standing army severely downsized in order to fund many of the progressive reform projects. The last major spending project of the administration was construction of the new capital built just six miles outside of Kabul. "Dar'ul Aman" was the selected name of the new capital and it included a royal palace as well as the parliament building. The overly excessive spending habits of the Amanullah regime combined

⁷⁶ Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan*, 74.

with a weak military and significantly underpaid civil administrators and bureaucrats left the King with an administration that could not govern effectively.⁷⁷

Social

King Amanullah began his regime with strong legitimacy founded on Islamic principles and nationalism through his call for jihad against Great Britain in order for Afghanistan to exercise its rights of full independence.⁷⁸ King Amanullah quickly squandered this advantage with his radical reform agenda which alienated military, tribal leaders, and the conservative mullahs. The reforms were clearly well-meaning, developed to support the rights of women and ethnic minorities, with the intent of supporting a modernization of Afghanistan and moving it towards a secular democracy. Having been inspired by the success of such movements in Turkey and Persia, the King disregarded the advice of not only his advisers but also that of his grandfather Abdur Rahman, the Iron Amir.⁷⁹ Although there was significant opposition to the reforms themselves, clearly the pace of change was also a key factor in their failure. Many of the reforms were simply announced by King Amanullah in the form of a decree and would not be heard of outside of the city of Kabul for months, normally reaching the rural areas in the form of rumors. This simply armed King Amanullah's detractors with additional issues to weaken his political power.

⁷⁷ Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 452

⁷⁸ Emadi, *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan*, 31.

⁷⁹ Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 462. "My sons and successors should not try to introduce reforms of any kind in such a hurry as to set the people against their ruler, and they must bear in mind that in establishing a constitutional government, introducing more lenient laws, and modeling education upon the system of Western universities, they must adopt all these gradually as people become accustomed to the idea of modern innovations."

The catastrophic event that destroyed the social contract between King Amanullah and the people of Afghanistan was his 1928 world tour.⁸⁰ From the beginning of his trip, the King received negative press reports back in Afghanistan. Photographs of Queen Soroya in Europe unveiled and wearing inappropriate Western styled clothes in both formal and casual environments were circulated throughout Afghanistan, angering mullahs and giving the commoners reasons to doubt the King's piety and judgment.⁸¹ When upon his return in July 1928, he convened a Loya Jirga and announced a sweeping program of reforms, the mullahs decided to act -- calling for a jihad to overthrow the king to restore Islamic rule, thus paving the way for the ultimate rebellion which ended his regime.⁸²

The analysis of the social environment of Afghanistan during the reign of King Amanullah illuminates the tension that can exist between the central government and the tribal and religious communities when liberal progressive reforms are forcibly implemented. Clearly the examples displayed by Turkey describe how the exact same reforms can be implemented when done deliberately and thoughtfully after having first developed a strong professional military and a large and effective civil administrative bureaucracy.

Summary

King Amanullah was ultimately unsuccessful in modernizing or governing Afghanistan because he failed to develop a national military that could maintain internal stability. He failed to

⁸⁰ Rasanayagam, *Afghanistan, A Modern History*, 21.

⁸¹ Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 450. "Rumors flew that the kingdom planned to bring back from Europe machines to make soap out of corpses. The King . . . had turned against Allah and Islam!"

⁸² Emadi, *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan*, 33. "Sadiq Mojaddadi collected signatures of 400 clerics who issued a religious decree (fatwa) condemning the King for violating Islamic values and pronouncing him unfit to rule."

establish support or acceptance of his progressive social and economic reforms by the people of Afghanistan, and lost power and influence to tribal leaders and Islamic mullahs. He failed to maintain or support an effective civil administration capable of delivering governmental services to the tribal people of rural Afghanistan. Although he successfully secured full independence and total control of Afghanistan and its foreign policy, he unwisely antagonized Great Britain and openly courted the Soviet Union creating an equally chaotic international situation to complement the chaotic internal situation in Afghanistan.

King Amanullah did not simply fail to develop a national military. He functionally dismantled and ultimately destroyed the Afghan military. He did this by actively ignoring the advice given to him by his closest advisers, Minister of Defense, General Nadir Shah, and even his late grandfather Abdur Rahman. Without a strong military he was unable to maintain the internal stability necessary to implement his reforms or maintain control over rebellious tribal leaders and Islamic mullahs.

King Amanullah aggressively established and attempted to implement a full range of progressive social and economic reforms. He had hoped to establish a constitutional monarchy in Afghanistan that respected the rights of ethnic minorities, women, and all religions. He failed to realize that such a broad range of reforms required an equally broad base of support such as internal stability, an educated population, support from tribal and religious leaders, and effective bureaucratic system to implement it. Without any of these support mechanisms his reform agenda acted in a way that accelerated his downfall from power, resulting in a civil rebellion that the weak national army could not repel.

King Amanullah allowed the once functional civil administration of the Afghanistan government to become an effective and plagued by corruption. He was not able to build the additional capability to maintain or extend government control or influence beyond the national

or provincial capital cities to the tribal areas in rural Afghanistan. His regime became isolated physically, politically, and socially. Rumors and speculation replaced accurate information regarding government activities, often to the detriment of the regime.

King Amanullah succeeded in establishing Afghan and foreign policy regarding the broader international community and establishing relations with Arabic, European, and Asian countries with whom they had formerly been isolated from. But he failed to establish the key relationships with nations such as United States that had the sufficient economic, political, and military influence necessary to support Afghanistan. Ultimately he openly played his relationship with the Soviet Union in a way that continually antagonized Great Britain and angered Afghan tribal as well as religious leaders. Although the Soviet Union provided significant financial support, they could not have the economic capability or political will to fully support Afghanistan and eventually became more concerned with repressing their internal Islamic militants.

The analysis of King Amanullah's failed regime explains much. His failure to develop a strong centrally controlled military was the key factor in his inability to maintain stability and implement necessary progressive reforms, and resulted in his overthrow by civil revolt. His failure to maintain and grow the capability of the government civil administration combined with the loss of support from tribal and religious leaders resulted in his regime being physically, politically, and socially isolated. With no viable dependable international partner, his regime was also internationally isolated. The situation eventually left the future of Afghanistan in the hands of the tribal leaders and the Islamic mullahs.

The key lessons that could be taken away from King Amanullah's regime were that the inability to develop a strong centrally controlled military led to internal instability and also contributed to the unsuccessful implementation of his reforms. Additionally, failure to build or maintain an effective civil administrative bureaucracy led to the physical, political, and social

internal isolation of the regime and prevented it's capability to provide effective government. Finally, international isolation had as devastating an effect as international hyperactivity for Afghanistan.

Section III: Nadir Shah

Nadir Shah (1929-1933) reestablished internal stability and also developed a multidimensional foreign policy that included both Great Britain and the Soviet Union. Unlike the idealist Amanullah, Nadir was pragmatic and understood the necessity of rebuilding and modernizing the military before forcing liberal reforms. Nadir quickly and efficiently rebuilt and revitalized the Afghanistan military structure which he used to stabilize the country.⁸³ Furthermore the reforms that he did concentrate on were more economic based reforms, which he implemented to stimulate the economy of Afghanistan and reduce the foreign influence over their internal economy.⁸⁴ He also understood the conservative Afghanistan culture and was able to gain legitimacy as well as the cooperation of the tribal chiefs and religious mullahs. Nadir dealt quickly and harshly with his detractors and those who were uncooperative. He used the 1931 Constitution to consolidate his power by establishing political coalitions involving his family members, close allies, as well as tribal and religious leaders.⁸⁵ Although his reign was short, he was able to establish the foundations that would last for forty years. His positive legacy was quickly reestablishing and creating balance in all elements of national power and creating a functional political coalition that allowed the central government to rule. His negative legacy was that in order to repair the damage caused by King Amanullah's regime, he had to cede power to

⁸³ Jalali, "Rebuilding Afghanistan's National Army," 77.

⁸⁴ Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan*, 107.

⁸⁵ Rasanayagam, *Afghanistan, A Modern History*, 23.

the religious mullahs and persecute the supporters of King Amanullah, creating two separate camps instead of a broad coalition.

Governance

The 1931 Constitution displayed the political agenda of Nadir Shah.⁸⁶ His purpose was to reunite the people of Afghanistan through the principles of Islam, consolidate his political power that would allow him to govern, and build the foundation for long-term political, military, and economic stability for the people of Afghanistan.⁸⁷ Because of the direct role that they had in bringing down the previous regime, Nadir permitted religious leaders more influence than they enjoyed under King Amanullah. Nadir deliberately undid many reforms implemented in the 1923 Constitution and returned Afghanistan to national gradualism in terms of political reforms.⁸⁸ Nadir received tremendously valuable support from his brothers and other close allies. Nadir and his family members, the Musahiban, had great influence and understanding with the Pashtun tribes. In September 1930 he called for a Loya Jirga of 286 members.⁸⁹ Nadir took a slow, deliberate, and moderate approach to implementing reforms. As he had advised the previous king, he noted that he wanted to implement reforms in Afghanistan and would have to first build a strong and well disciplined loyal military, supported by an efficient bureaucracy. He would also

⁸⁶ Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 464. "Collection of extracts from the Turkish, Iranian, and French constitutions as well as the 1923 Constitution, plus many aspects of the Hyundai fee Shari'a of Sunni Islam, and local custom ('adat)."

⁸⁷ M. Nazif Shahrani, "State Building and Social Fragmentation In Afghanistan," *The State, Religion and Ethnic Politics: Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan*, ed. Ali Banuazizi and Myron Weiner (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1986). "To rule according to the Shariat of Mohammed . . . and the fundamental rules of the country and to strive for the protection of the glorious religion of Islam, the independence of Afghanistan and the rights of the nation, and for the defense, progress and prosperity of the country."

⁸⁸ Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan*, 99.

⁸⁹ Dupree, *Afghanistan*, 463.

have to implement reforms in such a way as to not alienate the tribal leaders or mullahs.

Therefore he prioritized his effort in order to allow him to rule in an effective manner. He also believed it was important to strengthen the economy of Afghanistan in order to provide increased opportunity for the Afghan people.

In the area of foreign policy and international relations, Nadir's top priority was to bring balance to Afghans' interactions with Great Britain and the Soviet Union.⁹⁰ As Minister of Defense for the previous administration, he witnessed the chaos caused by alienating one or both of the great powers.

Nadir believed that a balanced approach of neutrality was in the best interest of Afghanistan. In May of 1930 he confirmed the Anglo-Afghan Treaty of 1921, and in 1931 he signed a Treaty of Mutual Neutrality and Nonaggression with the Soviet Union. Nadir was also able to build upon the positive diplomatic relations that had developed during the previous regime with countries in the Middle East, Europe, and Asia; either signing treaties of friendship and cooperation or confirming the ones that already existed.⁹¹

Military

As a former general in the National Army of Afghanistan as well as a Defense Minister and advisor to the previous regime, Nadir had the experience and expertise to rebuild the national army. These qualities enabled him to properly prioritize the necessary changes and then to skillfully and deliberately execute them. His main priority was to build the army and provide for

⁹⁰ Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan*, 102. Nadir's foreign policy was "positive neutrality and reciprocal friendship" with all states and sought to achieve two immediate objectives: non-provocative balanced relationships with both Great Britain and the Soviet Union, and acceptance by Muslim states.

⁹¹ Ibid., 99.

adequate equipping and proper training. Nadir and his brothers had strong ties and influence with tribal leaders. This combined with his successful campaign during the recent rebellion provided Nadir with the needed legitimacy within the military and tribal communities. Nadir was able to successfully utilize the “laskar” system of tribal armies that supported the central government during national emergencies. With no national army at his disposal Nadir was able to establish a fighting force with support from the Pashtun tribes located on both sides of the Durand line. Nadir understood that the tribal system cannot be counted on by a ruler to create or sustain internal stability. Nadir reestablished the national army's military academy in 1930, taking control of the training of future officers as well as establishing a noncommissioned officers training to improve the professionalism inside military ranks, based upon the Turkish army model.⁹² The army grew to more than 70,000 troops with modern weapons that far exceeded the combat capabilities of the tribal militias which it proved by successfully putting down multiple revolts over the next ten years.⁹³

Economic

The aftermath of the 1929 revolt left the capital city looted and the treasury depleted. The desire to remain neutral in matters concerning the Soviet Union and Great Britain also resulted in the loss of external financial aid and assistance. Nadir would be left with the challenge of revising the economy of Afghanistan without the assistance of the international community. Nadir initiated a series of aggressive and successful economic reforms that ultimately improved a previously stagnant Afghanistan economy. First, through efficiently collecting taxes, Nadir was

⁹² Jalali, “Rebuilding Afghanistan’s National Army,” 77.

⁹³ Ibid., 77. Katawz rebellion in 1937-39; Shinwari revolt of 1938; Alizai-Durani unrest in 1939; 1944-45 rebellion of the Safi tribe in eastern Kunar province.

able to replenish the treasury. He revised the investment system, transforming it into a national banking system which allowed the government as well as individual investors to pursue revenue, as well as successfully forcing investors to fund a draining of swamps in order to turn them into productive land. International trade in the areas of cotton, Afghan rugs, animal furs and skins continued to improve with Russia and Europe. In the area of internal infrastructure, Nadir completed the construction of the North-South Road running through the Hindu Kush from Kabul. The road improvement projects had a positive effect on travel and commerce inside Afghanistan, as well as allowing him the ability to quickly move military forces to and from Kabul.⁹⁴

Social

Tribal leaders and Islamic mullahs immediately forced Nadir to establish legitimacy with them due to the total breakdown of their relationship with Amanullah at the end of his regime. In September 1930, Nadir called together a Loya Jirga in order to establish legitimacy.⁹⁵ Nadir used the opportunity to formally roll back many of the unpopular reforms initiated by King Amanullah and established a base of support for his 1931 Constitution. The language used in the Constitution was specifically Islamic and therefore firmly established Afghanistan as an Islamic nation. This was a clear step taken to distinguish his regime from the previous regime. Nadir took additional specific steps to strengthen his relationship with tribal leaders and religious mullahs, as well as subjugate his political enemies.⁹⁶ The Pashtun tribes that helped Nadir seize power were

⁹⁴ Rasanayagam, *Afghanistan, A Modern History*, 23.

⁹⁵ Emadi, *Culture and Customs of Afghanistan*, 35.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 34. May 1930 Shinwari tribes led rebellion in favor of Amanullah, Ghilzai tribe uprising southwest region of Kabul, Kohistan rebellion July 1930 brutally crushed with Pashtun militia.

exempted from certain taxes as well as tribal levies for the military. Some tribal leaders were given honorary military appointments, and trusted friends and family members were placed in key administrative positions. Nadir was also quick to eliminate his political enemies and quiet dissent. His regressive reform efforts created enemies from the progressive supporters of King Amanullah. The consequences of these harsh measures resulted in the assassinations of Nadir's brother in June 1933 and his own assassination in November 1933.⁹⁷ The assassin was a high school student seeking revenge, whose family had been Amanullah supporters and had experienced repression under Nadir. The assassin was subsequently tortured and executed in front of his family to send a message to those planning future attacks on the royal family.

Summary

In only four short years Nadir Shah transformed Afghanistan from a failed state into a constitutional monarchy. Nadir Shah rebuilt the Afghan national military into a strong and modern force that allowed him to create stability within Afghanistan. He co-opted tribal and religious leaders and gain the support of the people by establishing an Islamic Constitution. He reestablished an effective civil demonstration and controlled the by placing family members entrusted tribal affiliates in key positions. He built upon international relationships established for the previous regime and brought balance to relationships concerning the Soviet Union and Great Britain. The newly transformed Afghanistan system of government would survive for 40 more years.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 35. Sayed Kamal assassinated Nadir's brother Mohammad Aziz, German Ambassador; Abdul Khaliq, a Hazara student at Nijat High School, assassinated Nadir during a student award presentation.

Nadir Shah quickly rebuilt the Afghan military that had been allowed to disintegrate during the previous regime. He modernized military training and equipment and reestablished the military college and noncommissioned officer training. He ended the tribal levy system focused on professionalizing the military. The revitalized military allowed him to stabilize Afghanistan and establish an effective government.

Nadir Shah established legitimacy and gained the support of Pashtun Tribal leaders and Islamic Mullahs. He established an Islamic Constitution and focused his reform effort on economic and not social issues. He allowed supportive tribal and religious leaders some of the influence and power that previous regimes had taken away. Those who refused to support him were dealt with harshly.

Nadir Shah reestablished an effective bureaucratic system of civil administrators that he controlled through family members and trusted tribal affiliates. He uses control of the civilian administrative and military base to extend his authority to rural Afghanistan. He focused his economic and infrastructure projects outside of the major cities and gained legitimacy from people.

Nadir Shah improved overall Afghanistan foreign relations and strengthened Afghanistan's position with the Soviet Union and Great Britain. He continued to build and grow relationships with countries in Europe, Asia, and among the Islamic nations. He balanced Afghanistan's relationships with Great Britain and the Soviet Union. He signed treaties with both nations and at the time of his assassination had stopped relying on foreign aid from either country.

Analysis of the regime of Nadir Shah showed the significance of government control over an effective military and bureaucratic system of civil administrators. Furthermore, it provided insight concerning Afghan culture, based upon his successful process to establish an

Islamic Constitution and obtain support from tribal and religious leaders. He used traditional as well as practical means to legitimize his rule and consolidate power. It also proved the value of focused economic reforms and infrastructure improvement that Nadir Shah utilized to extend his government's reach to rural Afghanistan. Finally, the analysis of this regime displayed that Afghanistan established a stable nation with limited foreign international interference or economic aid.

The key take away provided by Nadir Shah is that four years after the total disintegration of the government of Afghanistan he was able to rebuild the military, the government, and legitimacy with the people that resulted in a stabilized the country and foreign relations. The system that he built was the basis of the government and military of Afghanistan that lasted for the next 40 years.

Section IV: Operation Enduring Freedom – International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan

The historical case studies of Afghanistan's past regimes can be compared and contrasted with the current U.S. strategy being employed in Afghanistan in order to identify possible lessons learned. The analysis shows similar trends and methods that proved successful for past regimes are currently being employed by the United States and the international coalition. The focus is upon building a well-trained military large enough and properly equipped in order to provide the central government the ability to create stability and internal security required to effectively govern. The coalition is also providing a base for government while helping create legitimacy amongst Afghanistan's people through the process of developing and implementing a constitution while including the historic institution of the Loya Jirga in order to legitimize the process.

There is also the understanding that the central government of Afghanistan lacks the capacity and penetration necessary to provide security and service to the rural Afghan people.

Because of this, the Afghan people depend primarily upon their tribe or local community for governance and security. In the absence of a tribal system or when that tribe is weak, then rural Afghans are at the mercy of warlords, criminals, or insurgent groups such as the Taliban.⁹⁸ The current government effort is severely lacking and a major impediment to real progress and legitimacy.

The major task is to implement a strong military that is loyal to the central government.⁹⁹ A strong military can produce a stable environment that may allow the government the opportunity to provide justice and service to the people. To build a strong and capable military, will require enough money, support, and time to properly develop, train and equip Afghan formations. Without a strong military, the government cannot succeed.

Internationally, Afghanistan is no longer caught in the middle of the “Great Game” between Great Britain and Russia, but in new game involving ISAF, NATO, Pakistan, India, and Iran. Once again, the tribal areas divided by the Durand line along the Afghanistan and Pakistan border are critical. The United States and the international coalition have the potential to assist Afghanistan and help bring order to this area which is currently in chaos. Pakistan is currently the safe-haven afforded Taliban insurgents who launch attacks from the tribal areas bordering Afghanistan. If ISAF and NATO successfully develop an approach that denies the insurgents this safe-haven and addresses Pakistan’s concerns, it has the potential of tipping the scale dramatically.

⁹⁸ SAMS Seminar 9, Class 09-02. *From The “Village” to a Nation; The Narrative of Afghanistan in 2009*. (CGSC, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: 15 October 2009), 2.

⁹⁹ Jalali, “Rebuilding Afghanistan’s National Army,” 79.

The international community must also deal with the long-term economic and diplomatic situation facing Afghanistan. At some point there must be economic and diplomatic decisions and policies developed that address future engagement necessary to provide Afghanistan the strategic time and space needed to develop the capability required to penetrate into rural areas and provide effective governance to the people of Afghanistan. There is also the need to understand and respect the Afghan culture and implement any necessary reforms in a responsible manner that does not overwhelm the social or political environment, but that also abides by international laws and respects human rights.

Governance

In 2002 after the defeat of the Taliban, the international community under the Bonn Agreement established the Afghanistan Transitional Authority (ATA). Hamid Karzai became the interim President of Afghanistan, and the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan (ISAF) was authorized.¹⁰⁰ Significant to this process was the “emergency” Loya Jirga convened 11-19 June 2002 (1,600 delegates), at which Hamid Karzai’s appointment received legitimacy in the traditional Afghan manner.¹⁰¹ The same process took place after the development of the 2004 Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and the Berlin Conference in which the international community pledged economic aid. In 2008 at the Paris conference, the international community established the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) which established as its goal to create a “stable Islamic democracy by 2020.”¹⁰² The international

¹⁰⁰ Rasanayagam, *Afghanistan, A Modern History*, 259.

¹⁰¹ Saikal, *Modern Afghanistan*, 237.

¹⁰² Jalali, “Winning in Afghanistan,” 8.

community has not matched rhetoric with commitment, either with the required economic aid or the dedicated security forces, political support, and development of the mission on the ground.

National elections for the presidency of Afghanistan took place in August 2009 with mixed results. President Hamid Karzai was eventually declared the winner although there was substantiated election fraud as well as violence from the Taliban and insurgent groups. The incident left international observers and the Obama administration cautious of President Karzai's capability to lead the government and combat the increasing corruption within the floundering government. The new U.S. strategy demands a committed partner and Afghanistan's history demands a talented ruler.

Military

General McChrystal quickly established his intent of refocusing ISAF and NATO forces on protecting the population of Afghanistan and not upon killing the insurgents.¹⁰³ The new guidance changed the way operations were conducted throughout the operational environment. Restrictions were placed on the use of close air support and indirect fire in order to reduce and eliminate the number of civilian non-combatants killed or injured by coalition forces. There was also an increased focus upon building the capability of the Afghanistan government to deliver services to the isolated rural populations, normally outside of the reach of the weak central government. ISAF and NATO forces employed Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) which utilized funds provided under the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) in order

¹⁰³ General Stanley McChrystal. ISAF Commander's Counterinsurgency Guidance, August 2009, ISAF Headquarters, http://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/official_texts/counterinsurgency_guidance.pdf (accessed 1 October 2009), 1. "We will not win simply by killing insurgents. We will help the Afghan people win by securing them, by protecting them from intimidation, violence, and abuse, and by operating in a way that respects their religion and culture. This means that we must change the way that we think, act, and operate. We must get people involved in the active success of their communities."

to meet the needs of rural Afghans.¹⁰⁴ U.S. PRTs are mainly manned by military personnel with a minimal number of State Department members, but the increased troop surge announcements include civilian State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) personnel.¹⁰⁵

On 1 May 2002, President George W. Bush announced that the U.S. military would begin training the new Afghan National Army (ANA). The 3rd Special Forces Group was assigned the mission of creating an ethnically integrated national military.¹⁰⁶ This announcement represented the fourth time that Afghanistan had embarked upon rebuilding its national army.¹⁰⁷ On 21 November 2009, NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan (NTM-A) joined with Combined Security Transitioned Command – Afghanistan (CSTC-A), to include the creation of the Combined Training Advisory Group - Police (CTAG-P), all under the command of Lieutenant General William B. Caldwell, IV.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Curt Tarnoff, “Afghanistan: U.S. Foreign Assistance,” Congressional Research Service, (14 July 2009), <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R40699.pdf> (accessed 1 October 2009), 3. 14 NATO countries lead the 26 Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) located in the majority of Afghan provinces. The United States leads 12 of these. The U.S. PRTs are funded under two main programs to meet their objectives - DOD’s Commander’s Emergency Response Program (CERP), and USAID’s Local Governance and Community Development Program.

¹⁰⁵ Katzman, “Afghanistan: Post-Taliban Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy,” 45. There has long been consideration to turn over the lead in the U.S.-run PRTs to civilians rather than military personnel, presumably State Department or USAID officials. As of November 2009, the “civilianization” of the PRT concept has evolved further with the decision to refer to PRTs as Interagency Provincial Affairs (IPA) offices or branches. In this new concept, higher level State Department officers will enjoy enhanced decision making status at each PRT, in concert with rather than subordinate to a military officer who commands the PRT.

¹⁰⁶ Charles H. Briscoe, et al., *Weapon of Choice: ARSOF in Afghanistan* (Leavenworth, Kansas, Combat Studies Institute Press, 2004), 347.

¹⁰⁷ Jalali, “Rebuilding Afghanistan’s National Army,” 72.

¹⁰⁸ LTC David Hylton, “100 Days of NTM-A,” <http://www.ntm-a.com/news/1-categorynews/194-100-days-ofntm-a> (accessed 1 March 2010).

The Afghanistan National Army (ANA) receives large numbers of quality recruits; the goal is 305,000 personnel (400,000 under consideration). The seven Commando Brigades are outstanding and operate with SOF. The ANA development is focused in three areas; recruiting /training, professional development, and institutional development. Leader development is top priority with emphasis in the area of combined operations and transition to Afghans in the lead. Air Corps has good training results and is being used consistently during operations. The MI-17 helicopter is perfect for Afghanistan terrain, but short in total numbers. There are some problems retaining pilots. They sometimes go AWOL while in the states, or quit to get civilian jobs after trained. Further, there are major maintenance problems with the helicopters. The ANA requires 1,300 additional instructors and institutional combined arms training. Afghanistan National Police (ANP) casualty rate is four times greater than army. There is no ANP training academy in country; international training is conducted in Jordan, India, and Turkey.¹⁰⁹

The Afghanistan Security Forces are collocated with the five ISAF Regional Commands.¹¹⁰ The five Regional Commands consist of the following: Regional Command Capital (RC Capital) is controlled by France, the ANA 201 Corps and the Afghan Air Corps located at Kabul. Regional Command East (RC East) is controlled by the United States located at Bagram, and the ANA 203 Corps located at Gardez. Regional Command South (RC South) is controlled by The Netherlands out of Tarin Kowt, and the ANA 205 Corps located at Kandahar. Regional Command West (RC West) is controlled by Italy and the ANA 207 Corps collocated out of Herat. Regional Command North (RC North) is controlled by Germany from Konduz, and

¹⁰⁹ Video Teleconference (VTC) with LTG William B. Caldwell, IV, CG, and select staff, NTM-A, Marshall Hall, CGSC, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, February 11, 2010, 0730 (CST).

¹¹⁰ "ISAF and ANA Strength and Laydown," 1 October 2009, <http://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/epub/pdf/placemat.pdf> (accessed 16 April 2010).

the ANA 209 out of Mazar-e-Sharif. The ISAF current strength is approximately 102,500 troops from forty-six contributing nations. The ANA strength is approximately 93,980 soldiers.¹¹¹

Most of the major insurgent groups in Afghanistan fight in the eastern and southern regions taking refuge across the Pakistan border.¹¹² The Quetta Shura Taliban, led by Mullah Omar operates throughout RC South in Helmand, Kandahar, and Zabul Provinces. The Haqqani Network, led by Jalaluddin and Sirajuddin Haqqani operate throughout RC East, including Kabul. Hizb-e Islami Gulbuddin led by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar also operates within RC East, including the Khyber Pass. Also operating from the same safe havens are insurgent groups focused upon attacking Pakistan. These groups include Tehrik-e Talliban-e Pakistan, Lashkar-e Tayyiba, and Terik-e Nafaz-e Shariat-e. These insurgent groups are believed to be providing protection to Osama bin Laden and the Al-Qaeda Network.¹¹³

Economic

Afghanistan's economic problem is that the majority of its economy (66%) is either foreign aid, mainly provided by the United States government, or money derived from the illicit drug trade involving the production and distribution of heroin originating in the poppy fields of Afghanistan. The Afghanistan gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated at \$9.8 billion; \$3 billion international aid, \$3 billion trade and commerce, and \$3 billion production and distribution of illegal drugs.¹¹⁴ Afghanistan will have to develop economic markets and industries

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² *Institute for the Study of War*, October 9, 2009. <http://www.understandingwar.org/afghanistan-project/maps> (accessed 1 March 2010).

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ SAMS Seminar 9, *From the "Village" to a Nation*, 7.

that provide opportunities for its people and international drug trade will have to be contained and reduced. Afghanistan will require continued economic support from the international community and the United States government until the security situation can be stabilized and allow unopposed economic growth.

Since 2001 the United States has provided more than \$38 billion to Afghanistan, with more than 60% being provided since 2007. The Obama Administration requested nearly \$12 billion from Congress for use in Afghanistan in 2010.¹¹⁵ A successful counterinsurgency campaign that provides security and allows the Afghan government to build the capacity needed to provide services will create the conditions conducive to entice international investment. Foreign investments will be necessary to replace large portions of foreign aid and fuel economic growth in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan has been and remains an agriculturally based economy with more than 80% of the population involved in farming on top of a 40% unemployment rate.¹¹⁶ The U.S. State Department and coalition allies work with the Afghan government to rebuild the agricultural structure of Afghanistan. The NATO and ISAF PRTs are the lead organizations charged with providing local communities and villagers in rural Afghanistan access to the limited funds,

¹¹⁵ Tarnoff, "Afghanistan: U.S. Foreign Assistance," 1. The FY2010 budget request to Congress would provide \$2.8 billion in economic assistance under the State Department, \$7.5 billion for Afghan Security Forces and \$1.5 billion for CERP (shared with Iraq) under the Defense Department.

¹¹⁶ Kenneth Katzman, "Afghanistan: Post-Taliban Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy," 4. 40% unemployment rate; 80% of the population is involved in agriculture. Self-sufficiency in wheat production as of May 2009 (first time in 30 years). Products for export include fruits, raisins, melons, pomegranate juice ("anar"), nuts, carpets, lapis lazuli gems, marble tile, timber products (Kunar, Nuristan provinces). In 2009, large exports of pomegranates and apples to India and Dubai began.

programs, and technology available to improve their situation.¹¹⁷ This method of accessing, obtaining, and delivering goods and services to rural Afghans has earned legitimacy and built trust.¹¹⁸ The trust and legitimacy lead to increased information gathering and sharing, this leads to increased understanding of the population's problems, which allows coalition forces the opportunity to solve them. The end result is increased security and a more stable environment.

Social

ISAF and NATO counterinsurgency (COIN) strategy and the development and training of the Afghanistan Security Forces, have considered, respected, and co-opted many key aspects of the Afghanistan culture and traditions. In COIN operations, information gathering, information sharing, the employment of PRTs, the use of security sector reforms (SSRs), and implementation of the judicial system are all examples of ISAF and the coalition allies leveraging of the Afghan culture in order to build trust and deliver results. Within the Afghan National Military system the ethnically-conscious recruiting, development, and training of the army is essential as well as historically significant. The recognition and proper utilization of culturally significant forms of legitimacy, such as the "Loya Jirga or Arbakai," can prove to be effective points of departure or

¹¹⁷ Tarnoff, "Afghanistan: U.S. Foreign Assistance," 7. CERP performs a development function often indistinguishable from the activities of USAID and is a major tool of U.S. PRTs. Mostly used for infrastructure – 66% used for road repair and construction.

¹¹⁸ Michael Moore and James Fussell, "Kunar and Nuristan, Rethinking U.S. Counterinsurgency Operations," *Afghanistan Report 1*, (Washington D.C.: Institute for the Study of War, 2009), 25. "These smaller projects often times better demonstrate the benefit of an expanded American presence in Afghan villages. U.S. forces must assess the needs of the local populations and give them immediate, quantifiable humanitarian assistance such as medical and dental aid, radios, and blankets. Not only will this support and demonstrate that the population is the center of gravity, but it will raise the cost of infiltration for the insurgents."

missed opportunities. The coalition counterinsurgency strategy has the opportunity to create synergy when it can leverage these cultural systems, traditions, and situations.

The collection and sharing of information is a key element of the ISAF and NATO counterinsurgency strategy, and the basis of a successful coalition intelligence effort. As part of the necessity to change the focus from killing insurgents to protecting the Afghan people a number of distinctions must be made in order to collect and use the right information as well as ensure that it is widely shared and distributed to the right people. ISAF and NATO Commander General Stanley McChrystal has supported and established this new way of collecting intelligence within the subordinate commands in Afghanistan.¹¹⁹ General McChrystal believed that changing the system was imperative for two important reasons; one is that “senior leaders at the highest levels are making important decisions based on the information collected, that information should make its way from the sensor to the decision maker.” Second, the most important information that is needed to protect the population is information about the population, not the enemy. “White intelligence” (population based information) provides coalition forces the details of what problems the population is facing and therefore the problems ISAF and NATO should be addressing.¹²⁰

In order to further this effort, General McChrystal and Lieutenant General David Rodriguez, Commander of the ISAF Joint Command, have advocated and supported “community information centers.” These community information centers have been set up at regional

¹¹⁹ MG Michael T. Flynn and CPT Matt Pottinger, “Fixing Intel: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan,” *Voices From The Front* (Center For A New American Security, 2010), 1.

¹²⁰ Flynn and Pottinger, “Fixing Intel,” 21. Community information centers being set up at regional commands that provide on classified versions intelligent assessments providing access to all. The efforts are supported by Lieutenant General Rodriguez and General McChrystal. Information includes white intelligence as well as host nation information.

command locations and maximize the use of unclassified open source information with a focus on “host nation information.” This method is in synch with the overall ISAF and NATO counterinsurgency strategy and therefore receives great support by the Commanding Generals.¹²¹ The information gathered and shared assists units, PRTs, government officials and tribal or community leaders, which in turn allows coalition and Afghan security forces the means to successfully achieve goals and accomplish missions.

Summary

The United States and the international coalition are conducting an aggressive counterinsurgency strategy in order to protect the people of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, develop the Afghan National Security Forces, assist the government of Afghanistan in the effort to build capacity and deliver services to the people of rural Afghanistan, and address the regional conflicts involving Pakistan, India, and Iran, that will allow Afghanistan to secure its external borders. Officially the coalition is operating within an eighteen month timeframe before the coalition nations including the United States begin to reduce combat troop levels. Coalition commanders and their staffs must deal with the problem of how to generate the desired effects and secure objectives along the current lines of effort within the current timeframe.

NATO and ISAF forces are successfully developing a security system in Afghanistan that includes a national army, air force, and police force. The Afghan national military development includes command and control as well as logistical organizations. Training includes basic

¹²¹ Lieutenant General David M. Rodriguez, Commander of the ISAF Joint Command. “Supporting the Afghan Environment,” The Afghan Hands Blog. <http://www.isaf.nato.int/en/the-afghan-hands-blog/commanders-blog/supporting-the-afghan-environment-david-m.-rodriguez-ijc-commander.html> (accessed 1 April 2010). “Understanding the complexity of the Afghan people, then, requires a great depth of understanding of information, not just intelligence, about the Afghan people. We depend on good information and an understanding of the people if we hope to succeed, to help the Afghans build tailored solution sets that respond to the needs of their people.”

training, officer and noncommissioned officer training, including a four year military academy. Currently aviation and police training are conducted outside of Afghanistan; long term plans are to correct that situation. The long term success or failure of the Afghan Security Forces is an essential factor regarding the success or failure of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

NATO and ISAF are utilizing human terrain teams (HTT) and provincial reconstruction teams (PRT) within the context of counterinsurgency strategy in order to understand the cultural environment and better support the government of Afghanistan build capacity and deliver services to the Afghan people. President Hamid Karzai has established an Islamic Constitution and utilized the system of loya jirga as traditional means to establish legitimacy. The president's leadership and ability to establish an effective government have been called into question due to fraud in the recent presidential elections as well as continued corruption within his administration. Yet his Pashtun tribal ties may provide him an opportunity to reconcile some moderate Taliban elements and co-opt their support.

NATO and ISAF have also surged civil administrators, State Department personnel, and agricultural experts in order to build the government of Afghanistan's capacity to support its population. Historically, absence of a strong central government empowered the independent Afghan tribes that could provide the needed security and prosperity to care for the people. The harsh terrain and poor infrastructure of roads and highways tended to allow the Afghan tribes to conduct their business without interference. Today, Afghanistan's weak central government must build greater capacity in order to support a tribal system weakened by thirty years of war, poverty, and assaults from the Taliban, Al-Qaeda, narcotic traffickers, and warlords. The critical problem concerning the government of Afghanistan is its ability to build capacity within the current strategic timeline of the United States and the international coalition.

The U.S. State Department and coalition diplomats are attempting to create working solutions in order to stabilize regional security surrounding Afghanistan, with emphasis on the international border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Until the Taliban insurgents can be dealt with on both sides of the border the insurgency will not likely be militarily contained. In this situation international assistance is critical to the security of Afghanistan. Additionally, Afghanistan will require sustained economic support from the international community for the foreseeable future.

Analysis of the ongoing NATO and ISAF campaign shows an effort in developing the Afghanistan Security Forces and executing counterinsurgency strategy, the success of which will create the time and space necessary to build the capacity of the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Although President Karzai, an ethnic Pashtun, established an Islamic Constitution and has utilized traditional Afghan methods to establish legitimacy, he has not yet been able to successfully transform this into the political influence necessary to successfully produce an effective government in Afghanistan. The coalition partners have identified the necessity of addressing the regional security concerns of Pakistan, but that will be a long term ongoing process. The international community must continue to commit to the long term economic and diplomatic support required to transform Afghanistan.

Conclusion

The conflict in Afghanistan may ultimately be summarized as a battle between the strength of the United States' strategy of counterinsurgency and the ability of NATO and ISAF to produce a stable government, thus allowing the United States and the international community to disengage from major combat operations, entrusting the day-to-day security of Afghanistan to the Afghanistan security forces. NATO and ISAF forces find themselves engaged in this conflict not

simply against the Taliban or the forces of Al-Qaeda but against the holistic operational environment of Afghanistan which includes an historical and cultural regional context that has lasted more than three hundred years. The key factor to success or failure in Afghanistan will be its ability to develop an effective government that can produce the necessary security that will provide the stability to enable the government to deliver the services necessary to allow Afghanistan to develop and grow as an independent nation. The Afghanistan National Security Forces (National Military, National Police) are the keys to extending the government's penetration into the rural areas of Afghanistan in order to provide government to the people of Afghanistan.

The historical analysis of Afghanistan suggests that for Afghanistan to succeed as a nation it must have a central government, led by a strong legitimate leader, and supported by a strong and loyal military. The military creates the stability necessary for the government to govern the Afghan people through the delivery of security and justice. For the government to survive, the military must be loyal to the ruler or ruling coalition. Afghanistan has historically been led by Pashtun rulers since 1747 with only one exception.¹²² The successful rulers somehow managed to co-opt tribal and religious leaders and gain their support.

The situation facing NATO and ISAF when viewed through an historical backdrop would indicate that the current effort in building a large, capable security force is the key if not decisive factor. The speed and efficiency in developing a well-trained, well-led, well-equipped and self-sustaining security force over the next twelve to eighteen months will indicate whether Afghanistan will be poised to succeed or not. Historically, no Afghan ruler or regime has proven

¹²² Nyrop and Seekins, *Afghanistan: A Country Study*, 13-14.

otherwise. Based upon the current training results that show continuing progress, Afghanistan could be poised to move forward. The key unknown is whether Afghan President Hamid Karzai is the strong Pashtun leader capable of commanding the loyalty of the military, tribal, and religious leaders necessary to govern Afghanistan.

The current NATO and ISAF counterinsurgency strategy is presently providing the strategic time and space necessary to build capability in the security forces as well as the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. History indicates that victory in Afghanistan will have to be an Afghan process. At some point, an Afghan leader legitimate in the eyes of the people must utilize the Afghan military and take back his country from the insurgents. NATO and ISAF must continue to provide time and space, rapidly build capability in the military and government, and focus on the inevitable transition of authority that must happen in order to succeed. At that point President Karzai or someone else must be ready willing and able to take that responsibility.

Every Afghan hamlet located near the Afghanistan – Pakistan border is part of the newest version of “The Great Game.”¹²³ This new version 2.0 is the lethal competition to win the loyalty or subjugation of the people. Afghans at the lowest level are forced to choose between an absent, incompetent government or an always present but vicious and backward Taliban. For the Taliban the rules are simple: There are no rules. The Taliban will do whatever works today as long as it gives them power and influence. For the coalition the rules are equally simple: Protect the people long enough to allow the nation of Afghanistan to develop the capacity and the will to provide enough government in the forms of security, justice, economic, and social reform. The game will be fought in the rugged and unforgiving terrain of Afghanistan, but it will ultimately be decided

¹²³ Rasanayagam, *Afghanistan, A Modern History*, xvi.

inside the equally complex and unforgiving “human terrain” of the Afghan tribes.¹²⁴ History has indicated that the key factor required for a successful national government is a large, capable and loyal military, led by a strong, legitimate leader.

Comparison of the coalition analysis against the context of Afghanistan’s history has indicated that NATO and ISAF should continue to develop the security forces of Afghanistan while continuing to assist President Karzai in establishing an effective government capable of command and control of the military in order to stabilize Afghanistan. The government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan must establish trust and legitimacy between itself and the people through the delivery of security, justice, economic opportunity, and governance at the local level. The international community must transition to a position of support that will allow Afghanistan to develop without unnecessary interference.

The key take away concerning the United States and the international coalition is that historically the ability to develop a strong capable Afghan military has been the decisive factor concerning the success or failure of the nation of Afghanistan. The Afghan military and security forces can provide the link that will enable the Afghan government to penetrate rural Afghanistan and deliver the necessary security, justice, and services that the people of Afghanistan require. This is critical because the weakened Afghan tribal system leaves the people of Afghanistan vulnerable to the anti-governmental elements. A strong and powerful military, loyal to the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is the key factor toward development of Afghanistan national stability.

¹²⁴ Michael Miklaucic, “The Tea Fallacy,” *Small Wars Journal*, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/journal/docs-temp/391-miklaucic.pdf> (accessed 1 March 2010).

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